

all so we could call ourselves safe by TolkienGirl

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Summary: Fifty views of Hawkins. [One-word prompts, fifty sentences. Ensemble cast and canon pairings.]

all so we could call ourselves safe

1. Sometimes

It isn't like anyone is going to come up and punch him in the head and say, "Not over her yet, are you, Harrington?"—and he certainly, definitely, absolutely doesn't wish that anyone *would*.

2. Believe

Mike knows she's out there, even if it's the only thing he knows.

3. Gratitude

The gaping, oozing grin that splits two worlds apart is in front of them, but her hand in his brings him back to a hospital room where the world didn't fit back together again.

4. Love

It doesn't matter if the mashed potatoes are runny, not in the Byers house.

5. Music

Will's pupils blown out, light and darkness, hard to know what he's seeing—Jonathan cranks the speaker *up*.

6. Trust

The scars on their palms are enough to keep them together, even when they decide to be apart.

7. Tradition

"Why is Mike the dungeon-master?" Steve asks, and Dustin looks at him like he's just dropped an F-bomb at Thanksgiving dinner.

8. Snow

Silver winks on the gym floor (pretty), and they move slowly, slowly,

so that the dance will never be over.

9. Hope

Joyce swears she'll tear the whole house down before she gives God and Lonnie the satisfaction of giving up on her boy.

10. White

"You were gonna be a ghost?" Mike grins, and then—"We were the Ghostbusters. But we'd never have busted *you*."

11. Adorable

All her children are big-eyed and quiet and grown too fast; Karen presses Holly close.

12. Pattern

Hard not to play it back, *like we're in love, you don't love me, it's bullshit*, when it's beating in his chest like it belongs there.

13. Red

Lucas thinks that Max's hair looks like a bonfire, and he just needs to find the right way to tell her so she knows he loves it.

14. Dance

"Music's loud." Hop growls, in the parking lot, and then, before he can lose his nerve, "Wanna give it a whirl?" (Joyce lights up).

15. Captive

Will hates how it always takes him.

16. Watch

"You like that, kid?" When El—*Jane*—doesn't answer, turning the heavy metal over and over in her hands, he adds, "It was my old man's."

17. Flee

Will always tells them when to run.

18. Alarm

At Christmas, one of the tree-bulbs fritzes out with a sizzle—and Joyce's heart skips a beat.

19. Dying

Barb should have gone home, Nancy murmurs, against a damp pillow. She should have gone home.

20. Fan

The Hendersons don't have AC, and Tews chewed the cord of the box fan, and Dustin misses Mews, even just a little (or a lot).

21. Seek

If only Papa hadn't made her reach out and touch it.

22. Past

Yeah, Lucas can admit—girls used to be gross, but then...

23. Short

When the kids ask about growth spurts, Steve just looks down on them and lies that he's always been this tall.

24. Reflection

Nancy cuts her hair because she's tired of looking back at the same girl every goddamn day.

25. Coffee

"Bitter," El says grimly, brow scrunching up, and Hopper laughs.
"Told you not to snitch from me."

26. Sun

In the summer, it's so much easier not to be afraid of the dark.

27. Breathtaking

Steve always thought he couldn't breathe when Nancy looked *right at him*, but breathing doesn't get any easier when she's gone.

28. Movie

"Back...to the *future*?" El frowns. "How does that make any sense?"

29. Hands

Jonathan just wants Nancy to say, *hold me*, and sometimes, sometimes, she does.

30. Laugh

The first time they let her come over for a D&D campaign, Max's ribs hurt afterwards in a *good* way.

31. Honesty

Nancy doesn't know how to tell the truth without cutting herself or someone else open.

32. Home

The first night back in the cabin, El doesn't even dream.

33. Travel

"I know NYU is a long way away," Jonathan starts, but Mom doesn't even let him finish—"It's what you've always wanted," she says, and her eyes and tone brook no argument.

34. Water

Strange how floating can weigh you down, down, down.

35. Two

Lonnie left the old car, and the leak in the roof, and the debt, and the boys (the boys are all that matter).

36. Wonderful

"Guess we're like brothers now," Dustin says, and what the hell else is Steve supposed to say but, "Guess we are."

37. Beauty

Looking into Mike's eyes (and knowing that he's looking into hers) is all she wants to do, forever and ever.

38. Blessing

"We say grace in this family, now," Karen orders tightly, and Nancy wants to ask, *What kind of mid-life crisis, Mom?*—but she doesn't.

39. Warm

El likes campfires. They didn't ruin those in the Lab.

40. Chocolate

Nougat sticks a little in Dustin's throat, now, so he's turned his attention to Reese's—that can't go wrong, right?

41. Blanket

Mike left it the same, for those three-hundred-and-fifty-three days, just in case she needed it (or maybe because *he* did).

42. Stars

"That's the Swan," Jonathan whispers, "And Cassiopeia." Nancy almost asks which one is the lucky star, but then she doesn't, because she knows that no lucky star exists.

43. Darkness

Will waits until everyone else has disappeared, and then he tells Eleven, "I don't think he's gone. Just—trapped." He hates that she nods.

44. Light

"It's a lava lamp," Mike explains, to an unrelenting Hopper. "It's cool, and she wants one, and it's non-hazardous."

"We'll see, kid."

45. Simple

"I love you," Steve said, over and over, and it really did seem like enough.

46. Past

Joyce doesn't know, exactly, why she never chooses Hopper. She needs to get on that.

47. Fall

"I freaking hate this season," Dustin observes gloomily, as the leaves crunch under their wheels, because hey, annual interdimensional bullshit will do that to you.

48. Blue

"Is it..." El smooths down her skirt..."Your favorite color?" And Mike just says, "It is now."

49. Eyes

"We've all seen it." Hop sighs, stubs out his cigarette, blows away the twirling ghost of smoke. "That's why we believe."

50. Sadness

"We're fine, aren't we? Even after all this, we're fine."